

Message Text

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ACTION PM-07

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C O N F I D E N T I A L KUWAIT 4116

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: KU MASS

SUBJ: KUWAITI DESIRE FOR MILITARY ASSISTANCE UNDER FMS PROGRAM

SUMMARY: IN MEETING WITH DEPUTY ASST SECRETARY SOBER ON SEPT 23, GOK MINDEF SA'AD MADE CLEAR HIS DESIRE MOVE FORWARD AS RAPIDLY AS POSSIBLE WITH AGREEMENT ON HAWK AND A-4 AIRCRAFT PURCHASES. MINISTER ALSO MADE PLEAS FOR EARLY DOD ASSISTANCE IN ESTABLISHING CRASH PROGRAM TO PROVIDE TECHNICAL TRAINING FOR KUWAITI MILITARY. ACTION REQUESTED: DEPARTMENT AND DOD URGED TO MAKE LETTERS OF INTENT FOR HAWK AND A-4 PURCHASES AVAILABLE TO EMBASSY EARLIEST POSSIBLE TIME FOR TRANSMITTAL TO GOK. DOD ALSO REQUESTED TO INITIATE PREPARATIONS TO SEND TEAM TO KUWAIT FIRST WEEK NOVEMBER TO REVIEW GOK REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE IN PROPOSED TECHNICAL TRAINING PROGRAM. END SUMMARY

1. VISITING DEPUTY ASST SECRETARY SOBER, DCM, COLONEL COX (USLOK) AND I MET WITH KUWAITI DEFENSE MINISTER SHAIKH SA'AD ABDULLA AL-SALEM SEPT 23 TO REVIEW GOK MILITARY PROCUREMENT PLANS UNDER FMS PROGRAM. SA'AD CONFIRMED KUWAITI DESIRE MOVE FORWARD AS RAPIDLY AS POSSIBLE ON HAWK MISSILE SYSTEM AND A-4 AIRCRAFT PURCHASES. SOBER SAID USG NOT PRESSING GOK TO PURCHASE MILITARY EQUIPMENT; BUT IF AND WHEN IT MADE UP ITS MIND, GOK WOULD BE WELL ADVISED SIGN LETTERS OF OFFER PROMPTLY TO AVOID DELAYS IN DELIVERIES AND INEVITABLY HIGHER PRICES. MINISTER INDICATED
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BOTH WOULD BE SIGNED WITH MINIMUM DELAY.

2. SA'AD SAID GOK WOULD ALSO APPRECIATE EARLIEST POSSIBLE RESPONSE ITS REQUEST FOR US ASSISTANCE IN ESTABLISHING TECHNICAL TRAINING SCHOOL FOR KUWAIT MILITARY PERSONNEL (STATE 193232). WHEN PRESSED FOR SPECIFICS, MINISTER SAID KUWAIT WANTED TO ESTABLISH ONE-TWO YEAR TRAINING PROGRAM FOR SECONDARY SCHOOL GRADUATES WHO SUBSEQUENTLY WOULD BE ASSIGNED TO ARMY, NAVY AND AIR FORCE UNITS. US ADVICE WAS SOUGHT ON DESIGN, CONSTRUCTION, EQUIPPING AND STAFFING OF FACILITY WHICH WOULD BE BUILT IN AREA ADJACENT TO KUWAIT CITY. HE ENVISAGED NEW "RECRUITS" INITIALLY WOULD BE GIVEN 4-6 MONTH INTENSIVE ENGLISH LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION FOLLOWED BY TECHNICAL TRAINING APPLICABLE TO KUWAITI MILITARY NEEDS. INTENTION WAS NOT TO CREATE PROGRAM FOR SENIOR SPECIALISTS WHO WOULD CONTINUE TO BE ASSIGNED ABROAD FOR NECESSARY INSTRUCTION ON ADVANCED WEAPONS SYSTEMS. RATHER, PLAN WAS TO PROVIDE BASIC TECHNICAL TRAINING NECESSARY TO PERMIT KUWAITI MILITARY OPERATE AND MAINTAIN MORE CONVENTIONAL MILITARY HARDWARE. INITIAL INPUT WOULD BE 250 TRAINEES PER YEAR MOVING TO 400 PER YEAR ASAP. MINISTER EXPRESSED HOPE USG COULD PROVIDE DETAILED RECOMMENDATIONS WITH VIEW TO SCHOOL BEING COMPLETED AND IN OPERATION BY MID-1975.

3. ASST SECRETARY SOBER OBSERVED KUWAITI PLANS WERE AMBITIOUS BUT THAT USG, HOPEFULLY, COULD BE RESPONSIVE TO GOK REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE. HE EXPRESSED SKEPTICISM THAT KUWAITI GOALS COULD BE ACCOMPLISHED WITHIN TIME FRAME SUGGESTED BUT INDICATED WILLINGNESS TO URGE DOD SEND TEAM TO KUWAIT DURING FIRST WEEK NOVEMBER FOR PRELIMINARY DISCUSSIONS AND TO REVIEW KUWAITI PLANS. I MENTIONED LOCKHEED AIRCRAFT SERVICE COMPANY (LASC) REPRESENTATIVES HAD INFORMED EMBASSY IT HAD BEEN ASKED BY GOK TO EXTEND SIMILAR ASSISTANCE. SA'AD DENIED SUCH A REQUEST HAD BEEN MADE OF LOCKHEED. COMPANY WAS DIRECTED TO PERFORM STUDY OF POSSIBLE TECHNICAL TRAINING PROGRAM FOR GOK DEFENSE MINISTRY WITHIN THE TERMS OF AN EXISTING STUDY CONTRACT. LOCKHEED DESIRES TO SUBMIT A PROPOSAL TO ACCOMPLISH THE TRAINING. MINISTER MADE CLEAR THAT THERE WAS NO COMMITMENT AND THAT HE PREFERRED USG PERFORM SERVICE DESIRED. LOCKHEED AND OTHER CIVILIAN DEFENSE CONTRACTORS WOULD BE USED ONLY TO SUPPLEMENT USG/GOK EFFORTS IF REQUIRED.

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4. ABOVE DISCUSSIONS TOOK PLACE IN FRIENDLY ATMOSPHERE DESPITE MINISTER'S EXPRESSED UNHAPPINESS OVER PREMATURE PUBLIC DISCLOSURE ANTICIPATED KUWAITI PURCHASES HAWK AND A-4 IN US PRESS. HE ASKED THAT NO FURTHER PUBLIC DISCLOSURE BE MADE BY USG UNTIL LETTERS OF INTENT SIGNED. HE SAID GOK, WHEN QUERIED, HAD ADMITTED NEGOTIATIONS WERE IN PROGRESS BUT SAID NO PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT WOULD BE MADE UNTIL AGREEMENTS REACHED.

COMMENT AND ACTION REQUESTED: DEP ASST SEC SOBER, COL COX
AND I AGREE DOD SHOULD BE FORTHCOMING IN MEETING KUWAITI DESIRES
FOR ASSISTANCE IN ESTABLISHING PROPOSED TECHNICAL TRAINING
PROGRAM. MINISTER OBVIOUSLY KEENLY, PERSONALLY INTERESTED BUT
NOT WELL INFORMED OF PRELIMINARY WORK ON SUBJECT UNDERTAKEN
BY HIS STAFF. EMBASSY WILL SEND MORE DETAILED INFO RE KUWAITI
DESIRES IN SEPTEL. IN MEANTIME, WE HOPE DOD WILL UNDERTAKE
PRELIMINARY ARRANGEMENTS NECESSARY TO SEND TEAM TO REVIEW
PROPOSED TRAINING PROGRAM IN EARLY NOVEMBER. FURTHER, WE AGAIN
URGE THAT LETTERS OF INTENT FOR HAWK AND A-4 BE MADE AVAILABLE
FOR KUWAITI REVIEW ASAP. I EXPECT BE IN WASHINGTON IN MID-
OCTOBER AND WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR CONSULTATIONS IN DOD AT
THAT TIME.
STOLTZFUS

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